

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 4, and 8 have been amended solely to clarify the claimed subject matter. These amendments are not narrowing amendments. Support for the amendment to Claim 1 is found in Figures 8a, 8b, 9, and 10a, as discussed below. Support for the amendment to Claims 4 and 8 is found on page 8, lines 7-12. New claims 12 and 13 have been added. Support for new Claim 12 is found on page 12, lines 9-14. Support for new Claim 13 is found in Figure 8a, as discussed on page 12, line 9 through page 13, line 5.

Interview

Applicants thank Examiner Kelley for the courteous and helpful interview conducted with Applicants' representatives, Daniel Altman and Rose Thiessen, on October 21, 2003. As discussed in the interview, the pending claims recite a trigonal linear prism, a feature neither taught nor suggested by U.S. 5,840,406 ("Nilsen '406").

As shown in Figure 1 (corresponding to Figure 10 of the present application as filed), each trigonal linear prism depicted has a first surface and a second surface tilted relative to the plane of the front surface of the retroreflective article. The first surface and second surface of each trigonal linear prism retroreflect light striking the retroreflective article at an incidence angle of 0° .

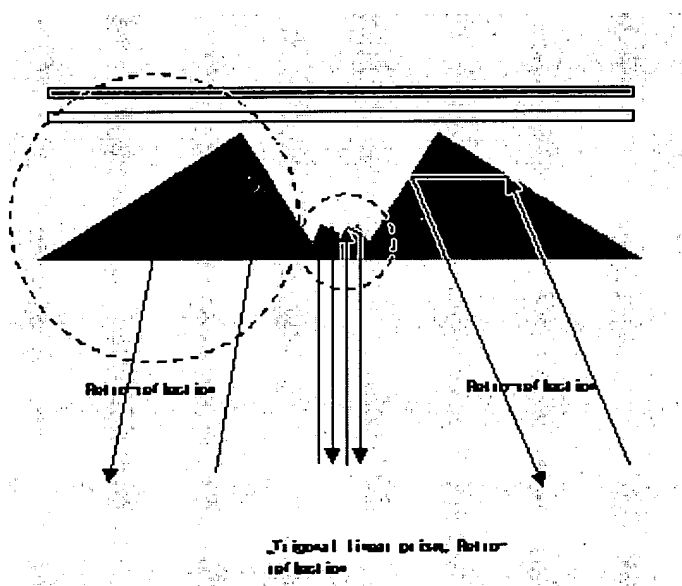


Figure 1

In contrast, as depicted in Figure 2, the window 10F in the Nilsen reference employs a “flat area” (see column 3, line 40 of Nilsen ‘406) through which light striking the retroreflective article at an incidence angle of 0° is transmitted, rather than retroreflected.

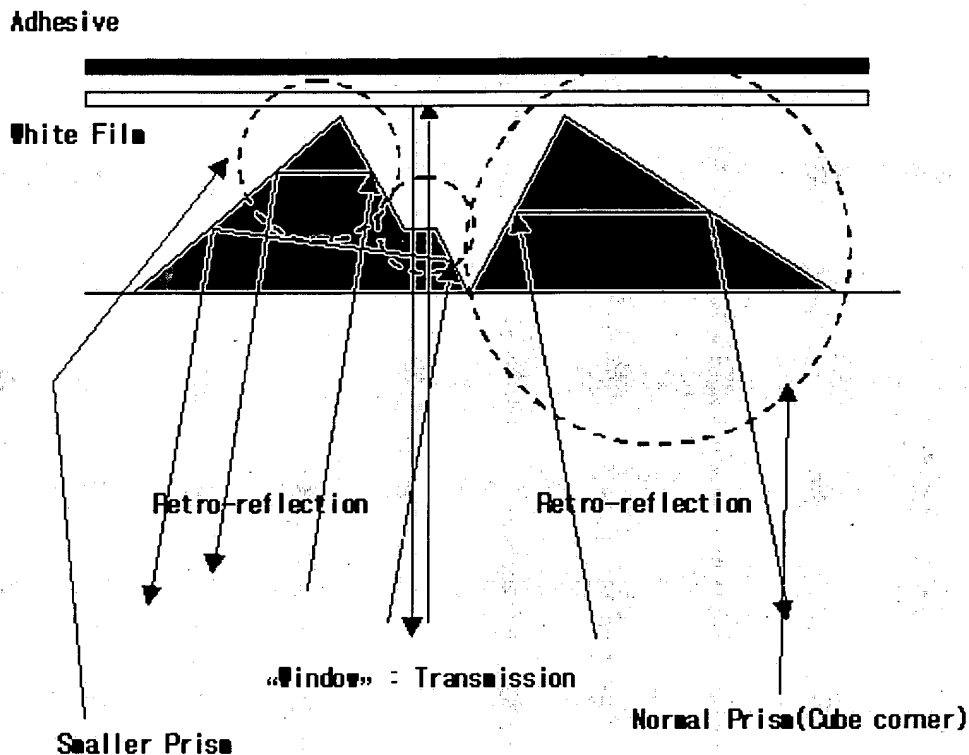


Figure 2

Applicants' retroreflective article exhibits a greater retroreflection capacity at low incidence angles when compared to that of Nilsen '406.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-11 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Nilsen '406. To articulate a *prima facie* case of obviousness, the PTO must, *inter alia*, cite prior art that teaches or suggests all the claimed limitations. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981 (C.C.P.A. 1974). In the present case, the cited art fails to teach or suggest all of the claimed limitations, namely, a retroreflective article comprising a “trigonal linear prism.”

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The pending independent claim recites a retroreflective article comprising, *inter alia*, “a continuous arrangement of trigonal linear prisms, wherein each trigonal linear prism is disposed along one of the uncommon edges, each trigonal linear prism having a first side and a second side which define an apex edge, a first base edge, and a second base edge, wherein the first side and the second side of each trigonal linear prism are tilted relative to the flat front surface of the retroreflective article.”

As discussed above in regard to the interview summary, the article as recited in the pending claims is different from the Nilsen ‘406 retroreflective article in that the claimed article incorporates a trigonal linear prism. The Nilsen ‘406 retroreflective article includes a flat window parallel to the front surface of the retroreflective article that transmits light, rather than reflects light as does the trigonal linear prism of the retroreflective article as recited in the pending claims. Nilsen ‘406 neither teaches nor suggests a retroreflective article comprising a trigonal prism as presently claimed, and therefore cannot render obvious the pending claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any remaining concerns which might prevent the prompt allowance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: Nov 3, 2003

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